Irwin Edman Reviews Santayana's "Persons and Places"

THE
Saturday Review
OF LITERATURE

VOLUME XXVII No. 2 NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 8, 1944 FIFTEEN CENTS

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"BEHIND THE UNIVERSE"
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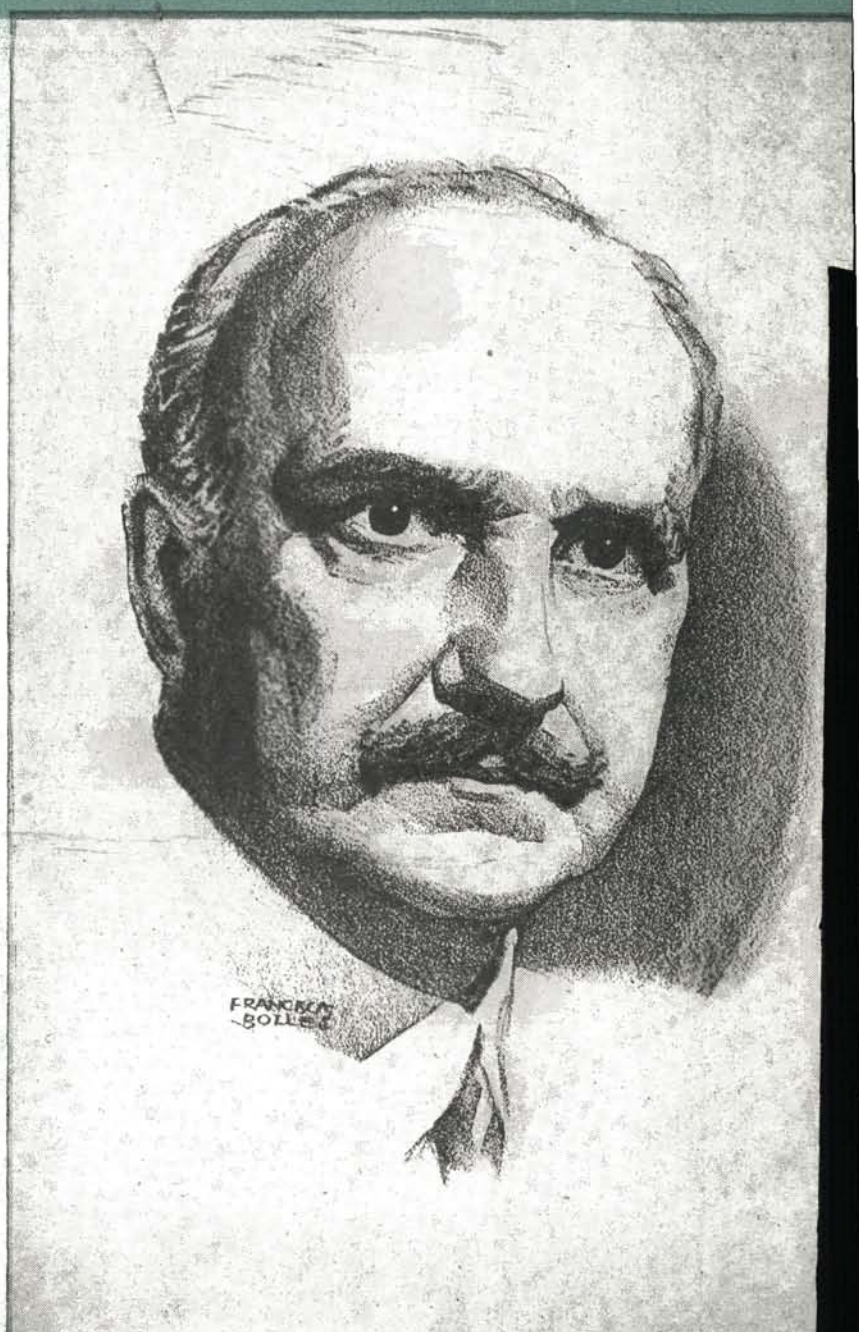

GEORGE SANTAYANA describes himself as something of a mixture of the monk and the poet. (See page 3)

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Religion of Disdain

Memoirs of A Gentleman's Philosopher

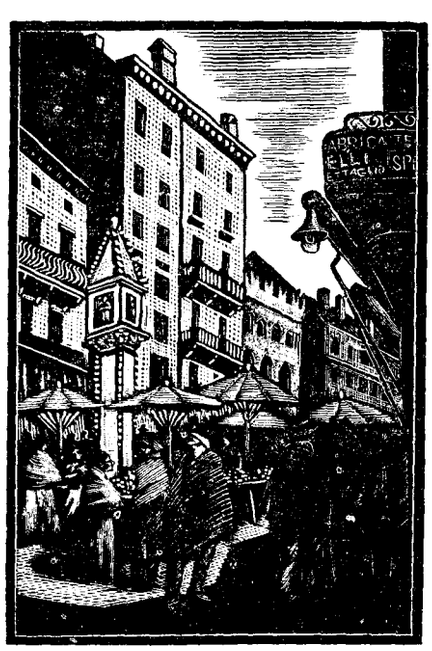
IRWIN EDMAN

HOW is one to describe the genre to which this remarkable book* belongs? Is it autobiography? There is much left out concerning even the years before the author's thirtieth, which the volume covers. There have been, in the author's own phrase, desert spaces in his life, "when the traveler was busy," but when, as it were, someone else was doing work under his name. This book is about those periods, partly, about *persons and places*. But, to a careful reader, it is a biography of the spirit, too, and not the least remarkable aspect of the book is the way in which an episode, slight enough, like the author's becoming the Lieutenant Colonel of the Latin School Battalion, is made the occasion for such a meditative flight of retrospective appraisal as the following:

> Not that I had then, or ever, any *ideal* hostility to sport or to polite society or even to politics or trade. As customs, as institutions, as historical dramas, these things interest and please me immensely and excite my imagination to sympathy with this form of them or antipathy to that other form. But I can truly live only in the reaction of the mind upon them in religion, poetry, history, and friendship. If I take a practical part, it is only by putting on a domino for the carnival. I am capable of that impulse, I can feel the fun and the intoxication of it; but the louder the rout the greater the frivolity, and the more complete the relief of stripping off the motley, washing away the paint, and returning to solitude, to silence, and to sincerity.

The whole enterprise suggests to Santayana himself the inevitable comparison with Goethe's "Dichtung und Wahrheit" or "Poetry and Truth." But it suggests also the difference. Santayana disclaims that even at eighty he has reached an Olympian vision, though he makes clear that he has always had a detached one. He thinks his account of his life has qualities (as it does) that Goethe's account of his life lacked—among others, the "pepper and salt and [though it is not always apparent to the reader] pity for mankind."

How is one to communicate the qualities of a work, destined possibly more than the philosophically ambitious "Realms of Being" to become a classic? It is reflective biography; so much so that though the book gives only the earlier years of Santayana's life, up to the time when he had for some years been a young instructor at Harvard, one puts it down with a sense of having had an appraisal of the whole. The author constantly reminds the reader and implies for him the perspective of great age, over eighty years, and the vantage-ground of a long career in philosophical thought, from which it is written. The book might be read with profit and delight for those passages alone which transmute events into meanings, and personal history into illustrations of eternal truth. But as the author himself remarks, he does not wish to browbeat the reader by philosophical argument. And if one chooses to read the book as a series of memoirs of those persons and places, fascinating in themselves (and in our author's hands always literally picturesque), one has here a wonderful gallery. The gallery, it should be noted, however, contains only pictures of things relevant to the background of Santayana's life. There is nothing here simply for its own pictorial sake, however treasurable the pictures presented to us.



—From "A Wanderer in Woodcuts."
"Gentlemen of Verona," a woodcut by H. Glintenkamp.

THE book tells all, or nearly all, that a reader interested in Santayana as mind, as philosopher, and as a man of letters would like to know of his life. It makes clear the singular circumstances which caused a boy brought up in Spain to the age of ten to be transported to the United States, educated at the Boston Latin School and at Harvard College. It gives unforgettable, singularly objective pictures of Santayana's mother and of his father, the story of each of whom constitutes, in a separate chapter devoted to each, a compact novel and a succinct moral tale. The first is the account of a highly independent, intense, though passionless, Spanish woman set down in relative poverty in Brahmin Boston; the second the story of the father with whom Santayana lived in his first ten years, a doctrinaire liberal in Catholic and conservative Spain. The reader is provided with an equally objective, though warmer, picture of the older sister who was really his second mother and for whom there is evidenced a richer affection than is discernible for anyone else in the book. There are incidental but relevant pictures of Avila, his native heath in Spain, and of Boston, in which he remained in his heart an exile and a stranger, as he did, he assures us, for twenty-five years at Harvard. There is an almost Dickensian account of the Harvard Yard in the late eighties and nineties, and of education during that period. All told, while there is considerable almost re-

**PERSONS AND PLACES: The Background of My Life. By George Santayana. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1944. 266 pp. $2.50.*

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luctant affection for the Yard, this college part of the memoir is hardly to be classed with sentimental and nostalgic remembrances. There is some admiration for some of his teachers, but nothing but a brilliantly contemptuous portrait of that pillar of the Harvard Philosophy Department of those days, George Herbert Palmer. And there are accounts of early and of lifelong friendships, among the latter one with C. A. Strong, the expatriate millionaire philosopher. If there was affection in fact, less warmth than disdain creeps into the record. There is a picture of the Sturgis family, very Bostonian, the family of his mother's first husband, and of his foster sisters and brothers that gives a vignette of the civilization of the merchant princes and the spiritual collapse of their tradition, their fortunes, and their powers.

The book serves to set in interesting perspective the personality revealed in Santayana's other writings, and, in part at least, to explain it. It is made clear, for instance, how transitory and external were the twenty-five years he spent as a professor of philosophy at Harvard, and the nearly forty years he spent in the United States. For all his gifted volumes of speculation, analysis, and meditation, he certainly is not to be understood primarily as a professional philosopher, and certainly not as a professor. The author, we are informed, never had a friend who was a professor. He notes that professors are, "like women," characterized by sham, and he notes among the miscellaneous boys he was thrown in with at the free school his poverty compelled him to be sent to, "Jews who wished to be professors!"

He describes himself in this book as something of a mixture of the monk and the poet. The monkishness is that of a fastidious lover of solitude; the poetry is that of the man who as a child loved imaginary architecture and religion, and sees philosophy itself, where it is truly chastened, as a beholding of essences. Animal faith may and must commit itself to *things;* for the purified spirit all things are essences to be beheld with equal sympathy or with equal lack of the warmth of engaged action, of human commitment. Santayana himself has betrayed elsewhere, he betrays here, an esthetic interest in certain kinds of essences, those whose form is clear and which are essentially form. It is the trait which led him long ago to dismiss Whitman and Browning as "the poetry of barbarism," and, for all his recognition of the Dionysiac sources of poetic inspiration, to show a taste for the reposeful and Apollonian and classic. Santayana is not altogether free of the genteel tradition about which he has earlier had such derogatory things to say.

Santayana is an artist, but he is a retrospective one. He tells us he was born in an unfortunate time, and he intimates over and over again that we are at the decline of a civilization. He has clung, with melodious insistence, to the exquisite, or the disciplined, and the classically austere. If he is a monk, he is a precious one, and he is a poet whose roots are in a neo-Greek and Catholic past. That is why this book is, among other things, so fascinating a document. Written in marmoreal prose, it is the testament of a disenchanted spirit, gay, if at all, with mocking laughter. He complains here as elsewhere of the good-natured American habit of joking. He has his own jokes, whose tone is always that of mockery. He was brought up first by a Spanish father who had a contempt for a good deal of his own country, and later by a Spanish mother never at home in Boston, and a very Catholic sister not at home among Protestants. Genteelly poor though associated with the rich, intellectual and artistic but thrown in with Philistines or mere earnest culture-hunters, part of Santayana's extraordinary detachment is made easier to understand, as are also his cool, distant, always half-contemptuous sympathy with all kinds of life, and the ironic disdain of commitment to any. He himself gives a philosophical examination of his detachment elsewhere and in this book. It is the contemplative freedom of pure spirit, such as a highly speculative angel might have. In his case it is an angel with a touch of the devil in him, for though there is an atmosphere of mellowness which the perfect prose itself does much to establish, for a detached spirit there are too many malicious darts of wit, not, one suspects, all deserved.

IT likewise becomes clear that it is impossible to understand Santayana without realizing that he is profoundly Catholic in his background, however early his characteristic scepticism developed. The impatience with Protestantism and Judaism have a Catholic bias, and the tenderness for religion is that of a poet essentially Catholic, too, in his temper. After reading the concluding paragraph about the town of Avila and his boyish life in it, one can understand all this somewhat better:

> It was not, however, for the High Mass on Sundays that I most often visited the Cathedral, or lingered

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Associates, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Harrison Smith, President; J. R. Cominsky, Executive Vice President and Treasurer; Amy Loveman, Secretary. Subscription, $5 a year; $6 in Canada and other countries; $4 for service men in U. S. At least 3 weeks' notice required for changes of address; both old and new addresses must be given. Printed in U. S. A. Vol. XXVII, No. 2, January 8, 1944. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

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there with the most pleasure. Any day at any hour, to make a short cut from street to street or to escape from the sun at the hot hours, I could traverse the dark cool aisles, or sit for a while in the transept, measuring the vaults with the eye, and examining the rather nondescript stained glass or the agreeable if somewhat obscure paintings in the great gilded reredos, or the charming twin pulpits, or the sculptures in some old altar or tomb. Enough scent of wax and of incense clung to the walls to preserve the atmosphere of the cultus, and the focus of it, where some old man or old woman might be seen kneeling in prayer, was usually some modern shrine; this was still a living church, not a museum or a ruin. That circumstance, like Avila itself, pleased and consoled me. Everything profound, everything beautiful had not yet vanished from the world.

Above all, this book makes clearer what has for so long been implicit in Santayana's writings: that Santayana is to be understood above all as a man of letters, a craftsman in words, a poet in his approach to philosophy and all human experience, a critic in his tastes and antipathies. But he is a critic whose preferences and aversions are those of a secular priest, a disillusioned believer, a cold connoisseur of the varieties of human wisdom and human follies. The tastes are those of a foreigner in America, an alien in the world, one to whom all existence is foreign, more than a little crude, and ultimately hopeless. There is, one may say, finally, more of the esthete than the artist or even the philosophical critic. There is no hint that at any time in his forty years in the United States he had any real concern for what might come of the crude and new civilization in which he found himself; there is no evidence that in eighty years of life he felt more than a distant commiseration for mankind —never a sense of participation with it or a constructive hypothesis for its improvement or its happiness. There is distinction here and elevation, and the integrity of a man who remained himself. The monk, the poet, the critic are all here, but so is the snob, and the not too charitable surveyor of those philosophies which feel the responsibilities of intelligence for making the world more bearable and more beautiful for the generality of mankind—of whom the philosopher is one.

John Barrymore married Michael Strange, shown here, in 1920.

By 1921, the classic Barrymore profile had become an established institution.

—*Photos from the Spencer Berger collection.*

The Brothers Barrymore on the MGM lot in Hollywood, where both worked.

Clown Prince of the American Stage

GOOD NIGHT, SWEET PRINCE: The Life and Times of John Barrymore. By Gene Fowler. New York: The Viking Press. 1944. 477 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by SPENCER M. BERGER

IT is cause for rejoicing that Gene Fowler, a very able typewriter gymnast, has spent his latest respite from the Hollywood treadmill in writing of his actor-friend, John Barrymore. He has come forth with a tasteful, affectionate, and impeccably accurate book which provides an eminently readable tale, and has remarkably freshened a familiar story by unleashing a flood of soundly documented facts, and enhancing these facts with illuminative anecdotes.

For the first time we have a full picture of the Philadelphia menage presided over by matriarch Mrs. John Drew, under whose iron hand Lionel, Ethel, and Jack spent their first years. The early pages of "Good Night, Sweet Prince" are rich with previously untold tales of this celebrated and celebrating clan. Unfortunately, John's mother died when he, her youngest, was eleven; and four years later grand old Mrs. Drew followed her daughter to Valhalla. Papa Maurice, talented and irresponsible, already marked for a tragic end in a Long Island retreat, disappeared into an alcoholic haze during these critically formative years for his children.

It is not a pretty sight, this portrait of "wild Jack Barrymore" which Mr. Fowler has drawn. The tragedy of unfulfillment, both personal and professional, which shadowed his span had its roots in his superficially gay youth. Although his subsequent recollection places his introduction to alcohol at the age of five, it appears that the bottle did not become his more or less constant companion until he was fourteen, thus starting a protracted wassail.

In 1903, a foundering and dissolute youth turned to the theatre, like Lionel, as a last resort. "It looks as though I'll have to succumb to the family curse, acting," Jack said. For the next decade, with Jack "in the theatre but not of it," it was easiest for him to cry out to his already established sister, "Help, Cassius, or I sink!". To have made any sustained effort on his own behalf would have interrupted his pleasures at the buffet.

Slowly, however, Edward Sheldon, sensing Jack's latent powers, set him on the road to Damascus. With Galsworthy's "Justice" in 1916, Barrymore began an unprecedentedly swift ascent to the heights. Although there have been countless conjectures concerning his defection from the theatre following his "Hamlet" triumphs, Mr. Fowler has extracted the truth from a hitherto secret diary. We find the actor roaming the Pacific alone on a

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yacht, the nightmare agonies of two essays at marriage behind him, and, three thousand miles removed from past scenes, resolved to become more of Dr. Jekyll and less of Mr. Hyde.

Returned to Hollywood, Barrymore is depicted by Mr. Fowler in a joyous frenzy as he "helped to design all his sets as well as the costumes, and otherwise participated in phases beyond the terms of his contract, and well beyond the powers of almost any other actor of his time." He, indeed, seemed enviable, receiving new wealth, the devotion of a beautiful wife, a son, and second daughter, and a home which grew in any direction according to his whim. But in 1934, six years after his third marriage, Barrymore again fled, this time to embark in epic fashion upon the last, self-excoriating chapter of his life.

Since Barrymore's late notoriety rests upon this final frolic, it is interesting that his biographer reverts to 1930, in which began five years of "dress rehearsal for personal disaster." The advent of talking films enhanced the actor's commercial value, and he was soon working at an accelerated rate. Nervous exhaustion set in, accompanied by an ever-increasing thirst. With this rising specter came another less tangible one involving his mental state. Recalling that his father, the once-gay Maurice, had spent his last years a hopeless paretic, Barrymore was understandably alarmed to observe lapses in memory and to experience physical pain similar to his father's.

Mr. Fowler describes the psychological effect of these symptoms during a hitherto unpublicized and terrible night in 1933, when the actor failed in fifty-six attempts to master a simple scene. Despite medical assurance that he was not organically ill, his growing torment destroyed his marriage to Dolores Costello and left him impoverished—financially, artistically, spiritually.

To the scholar (to whom Barrymore would remark that footnotes are "like having to run downstairs during the first night of a honeymoon") it may prove surprising that in the course of this lengthy book Mr. Fowler does not discuss or even list each of the actor's roles. Indeed, save for "Richard III" and "Hamlet," there is little critical comment of his work. But this, after all, is a matter of incontestable record, to be found in the nearest library. What we are given is an unvarnished and sympathetic picture of a great artist whose memory deserved this thorough overhauling. To read "Good Night, Sweet Prince" is to know the rare and tragic man that was John Barrymore.

What to Do When They Write

A Book-Club Author Grapples with the Fan Mail

LOUISE DICKINSON RICH

FOR years now I have been reading in the pulp magazines which I collect from the bunkhouses of lumbercamps after the winter's cutting is over and the crews have gone out, little advertisements in the classified section, saying, "Amaze and Mystify Your Friends! Get Gigantic Mails! Send Only One Dime!" I've been meaning to comply—when I could get a dime ahead—but now it won't be necessary. I've discovered a way to get gigantic mails at no cost whatsoever. All you have to do, in case anyone is interested, is write a book about yourself. Knowing no better and meaning no harm at the time, I wrote a book called "We Took to the Woods." Since then the volume of my mail has amazed and mystified me and the Postmaster at Andover and the mail carrier, at least. I don't know about my friends.

My publishers warned me. They said, "Look, Louise. What are you planning to do about your fan mail?" And I said, "What fan mail?"

They said, "Everybody who writes a personal experience book gets rafts of fan mail—even if it's a dopey book."

I thought it best not to investigate that crack, so I said, "Answer it, naturally." After all, I thought, if a perfect stranger goes to all the bother of taking pen in hand, the least I can do is show a little common courtesy. I still think so. That's just the trouble.

The first letter I got was from a lady in Virginia who, in her childhood, had oyster stew for breakfast every Sunday. She wanted to disabuse me of the notion that I was unique in that respect. Well, that was all right. I wrote her and suggested that we form the International Sabbath Oyster Stew Eating and Marching Society, thereby sticking my silly neck out a mile; because, believe it or not, the face of the earth is fairly teeming with people who, twenty-five or more years ago, used weekly to leap through this gastronomical hoop. They all-times-two have written to tell me so, and what could I do, in fairness, but invite them all to join? One thing has led to another, so that at the moment I am engaged in composing the alternate version of the Club Marching Song. The original version is sung during the months with an *R* in them—the oyster months. This variation has to be sung every Sunday morning from May through August, and it goes—But never mind. Probably none of my present readers is eligible to belong anyhow. I sincerely hope!

Louise Dickinson Rich at work.

While this feat of long distance organization was going on—and I'm no organizer—the mail grew to alarming proportions and even I could see that it was going to be impossible to answer it all and get anything else done. So all right, I thought, I'll just answer the ones I really want to answer. That was an easy solution which would have worked, if it hadn't turned out that I wanted to answer it all.

At this point I had a long talk with myself. I said, "Now you look here. You've served canned peaches four days in a row. Your sister's birthday sweater, already three months overdue, still lacks half the front and both sleeves. Your dear little baby Dinah's hair is growing every-whichway, when it would take only a few minutes a day to train it into a decent wave for which she would later thank you. It's time to get tough. From now on, don't you answer my letters at all, no matter what!"

I meant it, too.

But what are you going to do when a woman writes that after twenty years of married life she has read your book, and it has opened new vistas to her, so that she is about to leave her husband and flee with another? What can you do, except write

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back, special delivery air mail, "Hey, for Pete's sake, sister, take it easy! Let's talk this over!"

What do you do when you get a magnum of champagne from a reader? Champagne may fall like rain into some lives, but mine is not among them. An event like that deserves a "thank you" at least, seems so. So do the pecans from New Orleans, and the Camembert from Chicago, and the sherbet, packed in dry ice, from Somerville, Mass.

What do you do when a whole squadron of the Air Force writes you a joint letter telling you they liked your book and after the war may the survivors come and visit you and here's an Air Force pin for Rufus from the boys with wings? You go up into the attic, obviously, count the spare cots, figure out how many you can squeeze onto the front porch, write them that it's a date, and pray to God that every mother's son of them will be around to keep it.

Nor can you just toss into the canned milk case where you keep such letters the epistle from the gentleman who at the age of thirteen earned his way through school by playing the piano in Aunt Hat's House. (He says the whole atmosphere was genteel to the point of prudery and probably harmed him less than the modern equivalent of selling magazines from door to door would have done.) Nor the letter from the reformed roué who dates his regeneration from the night he got chucked out of Aunt Hat's without his pants because he couldn't pay the charge. Nor the report from one of her old girls that the Madame, softened by age, gave up the business and turned the house over to the Salvation Army.

What do you do when an old lumberjack, confined to a wheelchair in a State institution, writes almost illegibly in pencil that he helped put the *Alligator* into the Pond-in-the-River twenty-five years ago and that your book is the only book about the woods that he ever read that didn't have some damn-fool statements in it? He knows what he's talking about and you don't ignore a tribute like that!

What do you do when you get an official looking envelope from the U. S. Navy Department, containing the following terse message, written on an interoffice memo blank:

Headquarters U. S. Naval Shore Activities.
From—Officer-in-charge, Capt. L. B. Queene
To—LDR
Re—An unborn moron

Definition: Just a little inside dope. I'll tell you what you do. You sit right down and write Captain Queene (not his name, as how do I know he's supposed to write to strange women on the Navy's paper) the one you just received from that Canadian bombardier about—But maybe we'd better not go into that.

THEN there are the dozens of letters from women all over the country —just plain ordinary women like me— who say, "Is your book really true? Are you really poor and do you really have to work hard? Don't you really mind? Do you really have as much fun as you say you do? Please tell me the truth, because we're poor, too, and have to work hard, and it would help so much to know—" I don't call those "fan letters." I don't like to call any of my mail "fan mail." It makes the writers sound silly, and they aren't silly. They're swell people, real people. So how can I help writing back to say, "If my book has nothing else to recommend it, at least it is true. We've been poor and we've had fun. Being poor isn't so bad, nor is working hard, unless you make it bad by being ashamed of it."

And here's something else that's driving me nuts. I've received letters from people saying that the Book-of-the-Month Club and the reviewers may think I'm good, but as for them, they think that I and all my works are an offense under Heaven. My book's no good and I personally am obnoxious, conceited, opinionated, probably a liar and beyond question completely impossible. But that's not what makes me mad. Lord love a duck, I've been found impossible before. What makes me mad is the fact that these letters are always anonymous. This, on the one hand, gives me the perfect retort, ready made: to wit, "Impossible as I am, I have never sunk so low as to write anonymous abusive letters, like some I could mention." On the other hand, it puts me in the simply infuriating position of having the demolishing come-back and no one to whom to make it. (I hereby place in the Public Domain this diabolical means of hectoring writers who have incurred anyone's displeasure. I guarantee it as 100 per cent efficient.) So I go around all day seething with righteous rage over this dirty in-fighting and getting what poor satisfaction I can out of picturing the writers of these letters as being much fatter than I am, with round, white, blank faces, and insufferable smug expressions. Probably they have white eyelashes, too; and maybe even they whine when they talk and everybody hides from them.

So—The baby's hair still grows every-which-way and we had canned peaches this noon. Larry Parsons, the mail carrier, begins to look defeated and the Postmaster out at Andover grows restive. My publishers write me tactful letters about "What next?" and my agent, who knows me better, writes less tactful letters about "For crying out loud, when are you going to do a little work for a change?" And the mail still rolls in.

And to say the truth, I'll probably feel hurt when it stops rolling.

"I don't believe I can quite stomach Hemingway's books since he raised a moustache."

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Hölderlin in the Barracks

An Army Sergeant Reports on A New Translation

KLAUS MANN

TO read Hölderlin in English, in an American Army camp! To be captivated, once more, by this purest and perhaps greatest of all German poets, while we are fighting the Germans (not only the Nazis)! To be absorbed in these sublime auguries and invocations while the radio blares, "This Is the Army, Mr. Brown . . .," and my barrack-mates discuss apprehensively such ominous topics as night-guard, rifle-cleaning, and K. P. Life is amazingly rich in paradoxical, suggestive situations. . . .

The edition I read—sprawling on my bunk as comfortably as possible—is the one recently published, "Some Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin,"* translated by Frederic Prokosch. The slim booklet contains fifteen of Hölderlin's finest pieces—presented in both the English adaptation and the German original.

It is a truism that great poetry cannot be adequately translated into other idioms. If the translator—however sensitive and conscientious—is not a real poet himself, his version will inevitably be lacking in the charm and melody of the original. But if he happens to be a creative writer in his own right, he will produce a new poem by adapting the foreign text—a fine poem, perhaps, but essentially different from the work of art he ventured to reproduce in another tongue.

The job Frederic Prokosch has done seems to refute this axiom: some of his translations are indeed surprisingly successful. Of course, all conditions are particularly propitious in Prokosch's case. Here we have an American poet of Austrian descent—bilingual by nature, cosmopolitan by conviction and disposition. His own style has a compellingly poetic cadence—and this is true, not only of his verse, but also of his winged, irridescent prose, the sensual charm of which is manifest again in his recent novel, "The Conspirators"—a book, tenuous and problematical in some respects, but enchantingly saturated with music and mystery.

Yet, it was not without slight apprehension that I began to read these foreign adaptations of masterpieces so familiar, so beloved—translations which (to quote from Prokosch's modest introductory note) "are offered, apologetically, as humble versions of a poetry which uniquely transcends translatability." Would I recognize the splendor and persuasion of the original?

At certain moments I was perturbed, disappointed. I tried "Socrates and Alcibiades"—a jewel in two short stanzas: concise, lucid, a poetic epigram of striking beauty and simplicity. No, it did not quite come off. The German text is austere, succinct, concentrated; in Prokosch's version, it becomes colloquial, almost flippant. Why does he translate the German word *"Jüngling"* with "lad"? "Adolescent" would have been more appropriate, or, if he wanted a one-syllable word, "youth," even "boy." The question with which Hölderlin's poem opens (*"Warum huldigest du, heiliger Sokrates, diesem Jünglinge stets?"*) has a dignity and suggestive power in which the English translation ("Saintly Socrates, why should you incessantly praise this lad?") is definitely lacking. Socrates's answer—of the most moving grandeur in Hölderlin's formulation—sums up essential aspects of Hellenic philosophy:

Who most deeply has thought, loves the most living. He
Only values the best who has beheld the world,
And the wise in the end shall
Often turn to the beautiful.

Evidently, certain shades have to be sacrificed. When Hölderlin speaks of the *"heilignüchterne Wasser"* (as he does, in one of his last and most magnificent poems, "The Half of Life"), the double epithet has to be split into two and will thus be deprived of its strangely solemn quality. Prokosch's "saintly sobering water" in which the "beautiful swans" dip their heads, is of course not quite the magic liquid Hölderlin conceived; (the water he visualizes, incidentally, is not "sobering" but sober: its capacity of sobering the birds "drunk with your kisses" is but a secondary, accidental feature).

This amazing piece—"The Half of Life," written shortly before Hölderlin's mental collapse, in 1803—anticipates and surpasses a whole school of German poetry in the twentieth century—the expressionistic school—just as Rimbaud's "Le Bateau Ivre" became the model and fetish of generations of poets to come. Prokosch's version, al-

though falling inevitably short of the original, maintains at least partly its miraculous accents and images:

Laden with yellowing pears
And with wild roses filled
Lies the land in the sea:
Beautiful swans,
Drunk with your kisses you
Dip your heads in the
Saintly sobering water.

Alas, where can I find, when
Winter arrives, the flowers? Where
The light of the sun
And the shadows of the earth?
The walls arise
Speechless and cold: in the wind
Clatter the banners.

The moderate "Alas" with which Prokosch begins the second stanza is decidedly less expressive than Hölderlin's nostalgic outcry, *"Weh mir. . . ."* But the translator probably meant to avoid the English "Woe is me," thinking it somewhat old-fashioned, not to say corny. And, then, why should we carp? On the whole—I repeat it—Prokosch has accomplished something very remarkable: namely, communication to his English-speaking audience of the somber and yet elating message of the German lover of Hellas, the most disciplined and most profound of all romantics.

The three concluding lines of "The Half of Life" are a fine example of the translator's admirable skill: here the image conveyed through the English words corresponds almost perfectly with the original vision. And there are more such fortunate moments when Prokosch, with truly poetic intuition, finds the precisely adequate English terms to catch the flavor and pathos of Hölderlin's German text. The poem "Der Mensch" (Man), for instance, remained almost completely intact while undergoing the precarious transmutation from one idiom into another. The last stanza—almost untranslatable, one

*SOME POEMS OF FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN. Translated by Frederic Prokosch. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions. 1943. 32 pp. $1.

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should think—reads beautifully in English:

Is it not he who still of the living stays
Most blissful? O, but all the more deeply fate
Who equalizes all things also
Tears the inflammable heart of the mighty.

Prokosch, indeed, observes religiously the metres and expressions chosen by Hölderlin. And yet he is sometimes at his best where he ventures to deviate somewhat from the original, as he does, for instance, most successfully in the famous opening lines of "Patmos": "Near, near and—Difficult to grasp is the Almighty," for the German: *"Nah ist—Und schwer zu fassen der Gott."* The repetition of "Near"—missing in the original—is well in keeping with the sacerdotal tenor of the work and undoubtedly apt to increase its effectiveness. "Yet where the danger lies," continues the rhapsody, "Likewise lies the salvation."

Beautiful words, these—earnest, heartening words. What profound and highly welcome comfort in these splendid songs and fantasies! Are they untimely, out of place, under the circumstances? But they are timeless: their validity transcends all limits of time and space. They are encouraging, for all their tragic and nostalgic undertones; for they confirm and exalt the divine flame inherent in all human drama. Hyperion's Song is as essentially true today, in an Army camp in Missouri, as it was, 150 years ago, in the Neckar valley, or 2,000 years before, in Athens—the place and epoch for which Hölderlin was homesick, incurably, during his whole miserable, wonderful life.

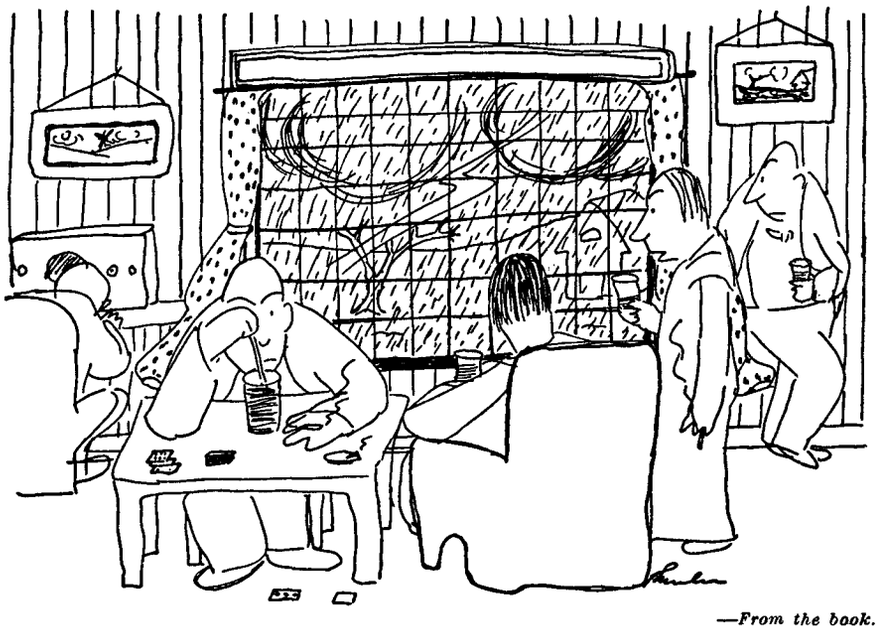
Sings Hyperion-Hölderlin—and I am moved, struck, comforted by his anguish and wisdom:

Yet we are destined
Never to come to rest;
They falter, they fall,
These suffering mortals,
In blindness from
One hour to the next
Like water hurled from
Cliff upon cliff
Down the whole year long into
The Unfathomed.

This is the truth: I know it. More essentially, more truly true it is than the tiresome vicissitudes and petty struggles of our daily life—in these barracks or outside. With infinite boredom, endless agonies we atone for our mistakes, our cowardice, our lack of imagination. All these necessary sufferings and efforts—so grimly, inescapably real now—will fade away, become chimerical. "Yet all that endures," says Hölderlin, "is given to us by the poets."

Klaus Mann is now serving overseas with the United States Army as a Staff Sergeant in the Signal Corps.

Thurber's Lowdown on Life



—*From the book.*

"This is like that awful afternoon we telephoned Mencken."

MEN, WOMEN AND DOGS. A Book of Drawings. By James Thurber. With a Preface by Dorothy Parker. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1943. $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE above title to my review does not indicate an *exposé* of Mr. Luce's excellent illustrated magazine, even though, according to a woman friend of mine, *Life* is frequently overweighted with "cheesecake and corpses." Mr. Thurber has another, and withal, truer view of life. And you tell me what it is?

Only a genius could have drawn the picture of the perturbed gentleman at a party assailed by one of Mr. Thurber's absolutely straight-haired females with the frightening words, "I'm offering you sanctuary, Dr. Mason." I fear to become as fulsome as the ordinarily—or lately—subacid (I've always wanted to know what "subacid" means!) Dorothy Parker, whom a Thurber book reduces to what my parents used to call "a perfect mush of concession." And me too. And it's New Year, isn't it?

Only a genius could—I said that. Apply it to 90 per cent of the pictures in this collection and you'll be right. A good way is to close your eyes, turn the pages, and point. That will be Bangkok, the capital of Siam, or, as it is now called, with a wicked leer, Thailand.

This review, I see, is rapidly deteriorating! But Mr. Thurber never deteriorates. Anyone encountering difficulties in his lovemaking can profit by "The Masculine Approach." It is a complete compendium. Much has been said of Mr. Thurber's dogs; but, so far, comparatively little has been said about the animal on page thirty-two—my guess is a hippopotamus—who is privy to the disappearance of a Dr. Millmoss. Also, a psychoanalyst could work out something interesting about the recurrence of *doctors* in the works of Mr. Thurber. But then, can't analysts do *anything!*

I can draw a little; I can draw as little as Mr. Thurber; but he can put a few hesitating lines on paper and give you people and animals with expressions over which you ponder for hours and from which you build in your mind whole Ibsen dramas and devastating novels. How he *always* gets exactly the *right* and convulsing expression upon their faces is his own unmilitary secret.

All intelligent people are now Thurber collectors. So, of course, you are. So why am I prattling on in this idiotic fashion? The question is rhetorical. The book costs three bucks. It's worth three thousand!

Judge Wm. Travers Jerome was a good campaigner. Some of his stories became famous, in particular one to the effect that, during the investigation of the purchase of what appeared to be an inordinate weight of sponges for a public dep't, the inspector under fire plaintively inquired: "Hell! Do you think I weigh 'em *dry?*"—From "Yankee Lawyer, the Autobiography of Ephraim Tutt."

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The Battle for Africa

Two Reviews by Frederick Gruin

ONE CONTINENT REDEEMED. By Guy Ramsey. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1943. 280 *pp.* $2.50.

GUY RAMSEY, of Harvard, Oxford, and the London *News Chronicle,* has written a vivid, sparkling book on French North Africa during the crucial early months of Allied occupation. He was the first British correspondent to send back an eyewitness account of the historic landings between Casablanca and Algiers. Subsequently his interview with General Henri Giraud was quoted by President Franklin Roosevelt at a White House press conference and by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden in Parliament. The details of these solid journalistic coups are contained in "One Continent Redeemed." But there is much else besides, for the author combines shrewd war and political reporting with a rich, three months' personal history.

Mr. Ramsey is informative, garrulous, sophisticated, enthusiastic, realistic, poetic. Before the reader puts down this book he learns, among weightier things, that the author is moon-faced, acutely sensitive to gutter and garlic smells, married to a composer of sonnets. Mr. Ramsey came ashore with the Americans, near Oran, journeyed to Algiers and the Aletti bar, went on to live with the R.A.F. in Tunisia. He likes to talk newspaper shop, often to a boring extent. He has a fine sense of detail, a flair for anecdote, a feeling for drama and personality. His command of French and his "passion for France" help him to a rare understanding of the French mind. He can be superior and acidulous, in the snobbiest British tradition; but usually he winds up with a temperate, balanced judgment.

The style of Mr. Ramsey's writing is distinguished. It is as remote from journalese as the average North African Arab is from soap and water. Here is a description of the invasion of the French shore on that November night a year ago:

> Silently, on muffled ropes, the boats went down, touching the still water with never a splash, only a faint kiss, like the stroke of the flat of a sword. Then, softly purring, their screws churned the water into a luminous silver-green, like the radiance of a glowworm seen through spray; and, almost at midnight precisely, they sped shoreward, leaving a gradually fading silver-green trail like the luminous slime of an electric snail. Then silence . . . becoming more and more profound as the purr of the engines receded.

On the controversial issue of Allied political policy in French Africa, Mr. Ramsey does not take a violent stand. He has a warm sympathy for the Gaullist resistance movement. He does not like Vichyites, but he understands what is so difficult for Anglo-Saxons to understand—that among legalistic-minded Frenchmen there can be nicely shaded degrees of adherence to Vichyism. For form, perception, and nuance of meaning, Mr. Ramsey's interviews with the "late, unlamented" Admiral François Darlan and with "tall, arrow-straight" General Giraud are masterly. But he does not accept the view of apologists for Anglo-American policy that expediency was the one and only possible course in French Africa.

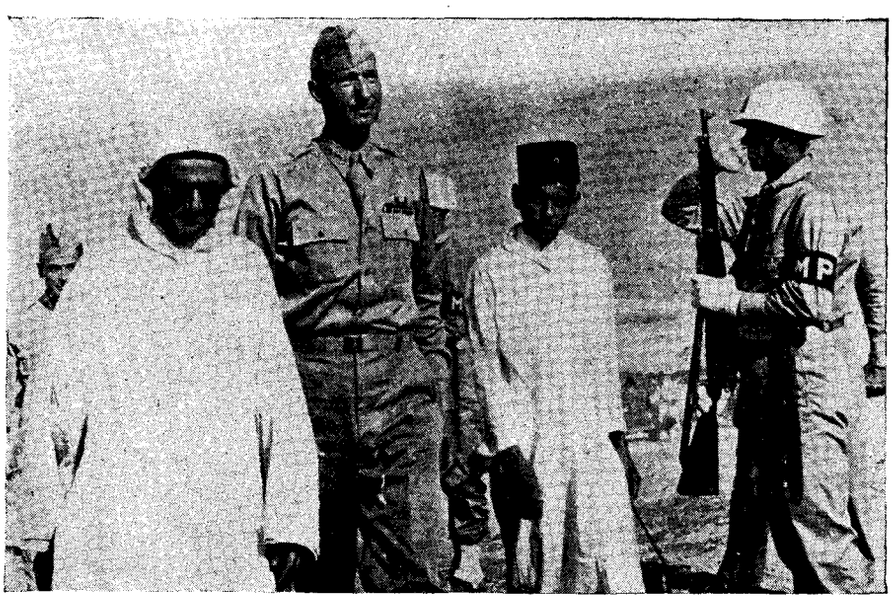
That view seems to be beside the point for Mr. Ramsey. More significant is this:

> Africa was, in fact, a Great Rehearsal . . . the mirror of all future [Allied] conquests. In France, or Poland, or Norway, or Czechoslovakia, or Yugoslavia, or Greece, or the East Indies, the same pattern will, of necessity, be repeated: the Darlans and Quislings, the "progressive" Girauds and implacable De Gaulles, the need to use any instrument that fits our hands; the difficulties of language, of drained and decimated supplies, of improvised, sparsely guarded communications . . . will be seen, and felt, over and over again. He is rash who prophesies in this war; but I am convinced there is another element in the pattern which will be repeated too: the sudden, staggering, German crack.

DESERT CONQUEST. By Russell Hill. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1943. 339 *pp., with maps and appendices.* $3.

GENERAL BERNARD MONTGOMERY'S indefatigable, indomitable Eighth Army has advanced some 2,300 miles within the past year. Across western Egypt, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, Tunisia, the Mediterranean narrows, Sicily, the Messina Strait, southern Italy—a brilliant, unparalleled military march that one likes to think will go on until Monty and his men roll down Berlin's Unter den Linden. The *New York Herald Tribune's* youthful, able Russell Hill went along with the Eighth, sharing heat and chill, thirst and dust, on its spectacular 1600-mile push from Alamein to Tunis. In "Desert Conquest" he gives a solid, straightforward report on that campaign.

Mr. Hill has a facility for weaving together skirmish and grand strategy. In describing the everyday routine of the soldier, the isolated, often confused fragments of battle, he never loses sight of the overall picture. He begins his story in May, 1942. It is a "rapidly cooling late afternoon" in an Eighth Army dugout in the flinty Libyan wasteland. Marshal Erwin Rommel is about to attack the British line strung from Gazala on the Mediterranean to Bir Hacheim forty miles inland. In bitter time the German offensive came, and it did not stop until it had swept up Tobruk's 30,000-man garrison, ground across the western desert



Lieut. Gen. Mark Clark, commanding the American 5th Army, pays his respects to some of the local dignitaries during the North African campaign.

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to the coastal bottleneck formed by the Qattara Depression and the sea.

Mr. Hill confirms one of the ironic might-have-beens of war: there was a moment in Rommel's initial thrust at the Gazala line when he was beaten back and ripe for a sharp defeat. But the cautious tactics of General Neil Ritchie "missed the bus." At Alamein Commander in Chief Sir Claude Auchinleck rolled up his sleeves and himself took field command. Before turning the Eighth over to Montgomery and General Sir Harold Alexander, the "Auk" did a good job of stopping the Afrika Korps hard, about seventy miles from the Nile, at the very rampart of the vital Middle East. Then both sides raced preparations for a showdown.

> On the night of October 23-24 the moon was full and it lit up with amazing brightness all the desert ridges and wadis. The British infantry divisions moved up to their starting line under cover of a very strong aerial bombardment of the enemy troops. Then 800 guns opened up with the most intense barrage ever witnessed in North Africa.

Thus Mr. Hill begins the story of Monty's march from Alamein. He follows it, stage by stage, methodically, with a comprehensive eye on the tankmen, the airmen, the supply lines, the weapons that all shared in the great victory.

In the final phase of the Tunisian campaign, Mr. Hill shifted from the Eighth Army to the United States Second Corps. He was in on the kill at Bizerte and Tunis, and he went up into Cape Bon to cover the "one last story." On that finger of Africa pointing toward Sicily and the European main, he saw the unforgettable spectacle of German mass surrender. But the most memorable thing was the spirit of the prisoners. They had given up, yet they boasted that the Wehrmacht was "not beaten yet, not by a long shot." Mr. Hill observes:

> I could not escape the conclusion that the German Army was far from cracking, that its morale was firm, and that it would have to be beaten decisively on the European continent before it would ever consider giving up. These Germans really believed Doktor Goebbels. They wanted to believe him. They did not want to lose the war.

Now Monty's men, along with the Russians and the Americans, are on the continent, moving in for the knockout. The rounds they won in Africa were the beginning of the end for the enemy. Mr. Hill has done a vigorous, authoritative, and wholly creditable job of reporting them blow by blow.

BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

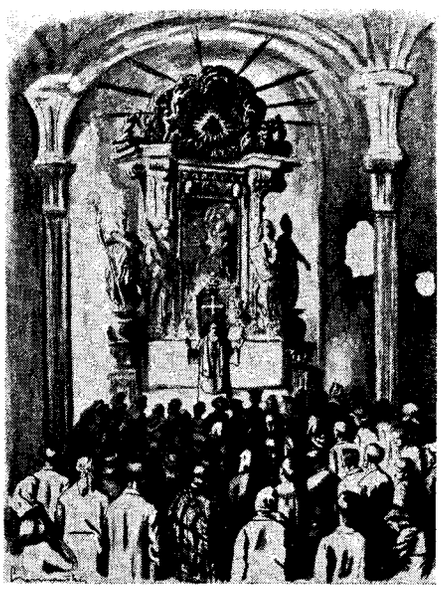
Mein Kampf vs. the Bible

THE WAR AGAINST GOD. Edited and with an introduction by Carl Carmer. New York: Holt & Co. 1943. 261 *pp., appendix.* $2.75.

Reviewed by GEORGE FREDERICK

GEORGE TAYLOR, in his "America in the New Pacific," made the sound point that World War II holds wars within the war. Inside the frame of the United-Nations fight against the Axis nations. the Left struggles against the Right, nationalism strives against imperialism, isolationists vie with the internationalists. Now Carl Carmer, one of our distinguished writers and teachers, has compiled a timely, challenging book that draws the lines of another fundamental conflict within World War II: the Nazi and Japanese attack on Christianity.

Between the Golden Rule and Bushido, the Bible and "Mein Kampf," the brotherhood of man and the cult of race, there can be no compromise. Once Catholicism sought a concordat with Nazism, but soon found that irreconcilables could not be reconciled; now German jackhoots pound St. Peter's Square and Gestapo bullies arrest Cardinals. It is a tremendous moral arena, and Mr. Carmer lets the protagonists speak for themselves. Here is Adolf Hitler ranting: "I am a heathen to the core! . . . Nothing will prevent me from tearing up Christianity root and branch, and annihilating it in Germany!" Here are Alfred Rosenberg's thirty tenets for a "National Reich Church," with the fifth declaring: "The National Reich Church is immutably fixed in its one objective: to destroy that Christian belief imported into Germany in the unfortunate year 800. . . ."



—Drawing from "Tale of a City."

The battle has a front within Germany itself, a front manned by such warriors as doughty Pastor Martin Niemoeller and the honest Bishops at Fulda. Pastor Niemoeller now rots in a Nazi concentration camp, but his flock at Dahlen must still remember his moving plea to abide with "the word of God."

Mr. Carmer, after painstaking search, has not found as many Allied replies to the Nazi threat as "there should have been." There is a "sword of light" flashed here and there, and he has collected the most shining examples. Pearl Buck cries for Church leadership. Henry Wallace says: "Democracy is the only true political expression of Christianity." Henry Sloane Coffin breaks a trenchant lance with pacifism. Nor does Mr. Carmer neglect the testimony of little men. He reprints the moving conversation between Richard Hillary and Peter Pease of the R.A.F., the letters of faith penned by fighting men before their death. Kees X., the twenty-two-year-old Dutch lad shot by a Nazi firing squad for trying to join the Dutch forces in Britain, sent a death-hour note to his father: "Do not mourn, but thank God that we may have the certainty of His Grace. Do not say: 'Because you are gone peace can be no joy for us anymore,' because after all, I gave my life for my country, as so many are doing at this time. Give me a firm handshake. God's will be done."

How can Adolf Hitler conquer such faith?

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 29

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. The solution to Crypt No. 29 will be found in the next issue.

BCADA FG FI AEADH CJKLI MNJIBAILIMA AFBCAD L CFGBNDH ND L ODNOCAMH, PCFMC KJGB GLQQAI, ND LB RALGB GNSBAI, AEADH DASRAMBFIT NWGADEAD.—G. B. MNRADFQTA.—NKIFLIL, F.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 28

TAILORS AND WRITERS MUST MIND THE FASHION.—THOMAS FULLER.—GNOMOLOGIA.

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ENURESIS

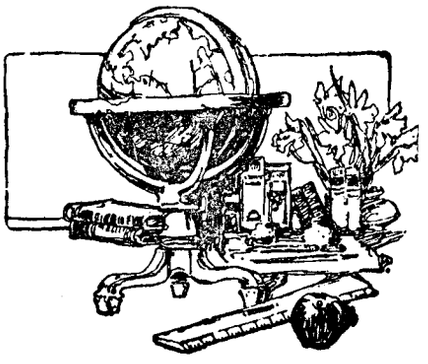
YES, we are quite clear-eyed about war. It has proved to be a necessity this time, and may again. It forwards technological advance, sweeps away historical absurdities, makes triviality unpopular, enforces unselfishness. Nor do we need to be instructed as to its disastrous after-effects—the loss of young life, the disillusions of weariness, the check to spiritual progress, the reaction into moral indifference, the patriot become cynic or go-getter.

But there is a crumb of comfort for this new year in which the end of conflict is at least distantly in sight. After this war, some attitudes of the literary intellectual in the United States are not likely to recur, at least in our time. A poem was written when the war was still young, about going home to see grandmother. Now there have been too many snowy-haired grandmothers giving cookies to good children, in what the populace calls literature; too many mammies, red-hot or ample-aproned, on the radio; and far too many blondes, beautifully brainless, in the movies. But this grandmother was different. She waits behind the door, as she should, and her face is properly withered, and she is recalling the snows of eighty years—which makes a pretty Christmas-card picture. Yet it seems that she is not thinking about Christmas at all, but remembering ruined daughters and broken leases; and she has no teeth, and suffers from enuresis, whatever that may be.

Americans (and their institutions) have plenty of grandmothers like that. We are not children to be reminded that old age is not always lovely and beneficent. But something was wrong with the poet. It was he who had enuresis, whatever that is. It was his soul that was toothless, unable to bite on anything solid and worthwhile in the world. We are all agreed that in the long armistice between wars this world was not a very pleasant or healthy place. Yet perhaps the fault was not entirely to be charged to the First World War, or industrialism, or economic determinism, or to the unemployment of the little man, or to the threads of rot working inward from the lunatic fringe into the once solid fabric of the state.

We must place responsibility also upon the custodians of our imagination—the literary intellectuals, and not only for their defeatist pacifism, as has already been done. They had lived too much in their minds, too far above the common ground. They had become parasites upon a materialism at which they could only sneer, for they had no clear vision of anything else. Capitalism, or the luxury trade, or mass-corrupting journalism, or the insincerity of "commercials," or anti-Semitism, or isolationist stupidity, or class fear which closed the windows and left the door open to the barbarians—each one of these was not for them a challenge to be met, but a toothless old grandmother with enuresis. It was easier to sneer and be cynical than to challenge Caliban with visions of a brave new world.

It is said, and we believe it, that thousands of the best of our college-bred—the intellectuals and those whose business is ideas, not only the athletes and the warriors by instinct—are more than willing to be drafted into the armed services. They hate war, they are keenly aware of the stupidities, the selfishness, the materialism, the refusals to see evil again rampant, which brought on this one. They expect hardship and are aware of the percentage of death. But something in them craves an experience that is not egocentric. They want to escape for a while to the common ground, feel their bodies harden and suffer, break through the dangerous divorce between the mental and physical, share in mass obedience to leadership, while well aware of its dangers if too long continued. It is the most serious charge against our civilization that it takes a war to make this possible for most young college-bred Americans. Hating war, one can still understand their motive, and expect from those who live and keep their balance, their sense of humor, and their ultimate objectives, a good result.



Expect, but not count on it. What happens to this generation, educated for peace, now rushed into war, depends naturally upon what kind of a country they come back to. If the chief issue when they return is still how to sentimentalize grandma in order to sell the most cookies, there will be another outbreak of enuresis, whatever that may be.

H. S. C.

Anisfield Awards

THE Anisfield Awards, founded by Mrs. Edith Anisfield Wolf in memory of her father, will again be offered this year under the sponsorship of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, for the best books on the subject of racial relations. These books may be either historical, sociological, psychological, etc., or in creative or imaginative literature. The purpose will be to honor the best book in racial relations, whatever its nature.

There will be two prizes, a first prize of $1,500 for a book which is in the estimation of the judges the best, and a second prize of $500. Publishers are requested to send important books published in 1943, to Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild, Washington Square East, New York City; three copies of each book submitted. They are especially requested to send this year, books of real importance dealing with the position of the Jewish people in the contemporary world picture, although books dealing with racial relations other than Jewish ones are not to be ruled out of the competition. The judges of the contest will be Henry Seidel Canby, Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild, and Professor Ralph Linton.

Arthur Willis Colton

THE death has been announced as of December 28 of Arthur Willis Colton, a man of letters, of ripe scholarship, and excellent imagination, who was one of the earliest contributors to *The Literary Review* of the old *New York Evening Post* and *The Saturday Review of Literature* which succeeded it. Mr. Colton was a leader in the brief flowering of the romantic movement in the United States, which preceded the turn toward realism at the end of the first decade of this century. He was an essayist, poet, and critic, but particularly a short-story writer of unusual distinction. Such stories as are included in his volume called "The Delectable Mountains" have a delicacy and beauty which are likely to give them a permanent place in American literary history.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Churchill and Twain

SIR: Apropos of the fact that the 69th anniversary of Winston Churchill's birth and the 108th of Mark Twain's birth were both celebrated on November 30th, your readers may be interested in knowing that the two men first met at a dinner party given in London by Sir Gilbert Parker. When Churchill gave his first lecture in America, Mark introduced him in Carnegie Hall with remarks brief but felicitous, "Ladies and gentlemen: I present to you the son of an American mother and an English father, the perfect combination—Winston Churchill."

In regards to the following letter which I have just received, Mark wrote the following Pudd'nhead Wilson maxim in the first inscribed volume of the set. Churchill enjoys quoting it as a joke on himself, "To be good is noble, but to show others how to be good is nobler—and no trouble."

10 Downing Street, Whitehall
25 October, 1943

Dear Mr. Clemens,

I am writing to express my thanks to the International Mark Twain Society for their Gold Medal, which has been presented to me by Mr. Philip Guedalla.

It will serve to keep fresh my memory of a great American, who showed me such kindness when I visited New York as a young man by taking the Chair at my first public lecture and by autographing copies of his works, which still form a valued part of my library.

Winston S. Churchill

CYRIL CLEMENS.

Webster Groves, Mo.

For Future Reference

SIR: A recent story in the *SRL* recalls one I used to hear of a white man captured by the Indians, and reserved for torture. In the interim it occurred to one of the braves to make trial of how he would support the ordeal. He bore the infliction with what stoicism he could muster, and at the conclusion asked, "may the white man now try the Indian's courage?" In their code noblesse oblige. After a few preliminaries the white took the brave's tomahawk and whirling it a few times, with all his might brought it down on the head of the unsuspecting savage; thinking in their fury he might be instantly despatched. But not at all. "Him no right here," pointing to the head. Plainly he was a very undesirable being to have in their midst, and in great perturbation they drove him forth from among them.

W. C. ROSE.

Ashland, Mass.

An Argument for Basic English

SIR: The current interest in Basic English brought to mind the following letters which I received when in charge of the foreign subscriptions of the International Magazine Co., many years ago.

As an illustration of the difficulty of writing even a simple business letter if one depends on a dictionary and phrase book they are eloquent. Perhaps Basic English might also be funny but the process would surely be less of a struggle.

Letter from G. Otomune, Osaka, Japan

Dear Sir:

I am ask you at once to the reason have these difference of $2.00 on which written as $5.00 on subscription form and as also $3.00 on your letter of 15th Mar. If you will clear me wither to take you by return, I am follow to you promptly a remittance which kindly oblige.

Very truly yours

Letter from Mrs. F. A. de L B., Chile

Dear Sirs:

By an hazard I have had the opportunity of know, and though only for some few pages, damaged and old, your interesting magazine *Good Housekeeping*. And in spite of the few which I could see he has pleased me very much. Therefore, willing subscribe me to him. I beg please tell me your amount and if possible send me a copy for know him.

Likeways, I have noticed in one of the advertisements, one of your Print Department Special and which you offer to yours readers a good illustrated picture catalog. Willing earnestly be myself also a grantee of yours kindness. I request highly please deign me a copy of your pleasing gift, amiability, which I shall acknowledge yours sincerely. Originals of such pictures have they by chance for sell? Tell me sizes and prices in case affirmative.

Too, I beg, please give me full instructions about of the club "Fortuna's Daughters" who also I have seed in a page of your review.

Awaiting the pleasure of your esteemed reply, I am Dear Sirs

.....

P.S. Being our Post Offices very defectible, especially in the Division Distribution, where the clerks frequently they open or rob the correspondence foreign, I request exceedingly please send me your graceful gift very fixed and "Registered."

Pleasing also very much to my husband the magazines foreign. I beg please recommend me, and if possible send me a copy of some good review suitable for men, for court him secretly with a subscription: and another for children.

SARAH B. BALL.

Kent, Conn.

"This is our Easy-to-Fix $10 Cook Book. All you have to do is to read the gist of it in this pamphlet which we give away free with every copy."

"Poison Gas," etc.

SIR: The existence of *SRL* is justified by one article alone, in your issue of Nov. 6th—Houston Peterson's "Poison Gas and the Coming Peace." Alas! that it may be read only by the élite who constitute your subscribers. Its truth should be driven into the uncomprehending heads of 90% of our people. Could *Reader's Digest* be induced to reprint it? All praise to Mr. Peterson!

FRANKLIN WENTWORTH.

Redondo Beach, Cal.

Information, Please

SIR: I am engaged in collecting and editing the correspondence of the American poet, Edward Rowland Sill. I shall be most grateful to any of your readers who can inform me concerning the present location of manuscript letters to or from this writer.

STANLEY T. WILLIAMS.

Hamden, Conn.

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TRADE Winds

THE LITERARY SCENE

◆◆ In Washington, if *The New Republic* is not off base, Senator Wheeler is planning to investigate John Roy Carlson, author of "Under Cover." If he goes through with it, Wendell Willkie probably will act as defense counsel, and Writers' War Board Chairman Rex Stout will be one of Carlson's chief witnesses.

◆◆ In Southern Italy, reports Vincent Sheean, an American flier won a coveted Free French decoration, but he was so ugly they couldn't find a French general who was willing to kiss him.

◆◆ In Chicago, Marshall Field's and Kroch's experienced a sudden run on F. S. Crafford's book about Jan Smuts. Investigation disclosed that many customers had read too hurriedly *The Tribune* headline for a review of the book: "Blunt, virile Smuts."

◆◆ In New York, Phil Baker is typing away on an autobiography which he will name "Take It or Leave It," after the popular radio show he M.C.s. Baker received a letter last week—possibly from his press agent—which read, "Dear Phil; Here's a real $64 question for you: will you lend me $64?"

◆◆ In Hollywood, at the town's busiest intersection, writes Emily Kimbrough, Cornelia Otis Skinner saw a little boy stroll unconcernedly into the path of an oncoming sedan. She screamed, snatched him up under her arm, jumped to the safety of the curbstone. He turned out to be a midget of fifty, with a war-worker's badge on his lapel, and a quaint and extensive vocabulary.

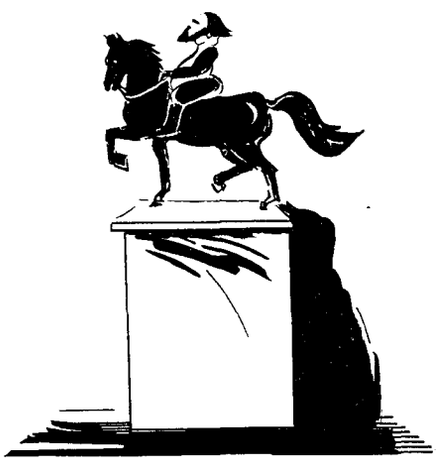
◆◆ In Arizona, a sage veteran of the political arena counseled an author who is a tyro in president-making, "Remember, Bud, that no matter how you slice it, the coming campaign is going to narrow down to just two theme songs. The outs will sing 'Get those bums outa there'; the ins will sing 'Don't change horses in midstream!'"

◆◆ In Rockingham, Rhode Island, race-track followers heard Winchell plug Allan Chase's book "Falange" over the radio, thought he was saying "Flange," a horse running in the third race the following afternoon. They backed him heavily. He finished first, paying 8 to 1.

◆◆ In Boston, vows *The New Yorker* Magazine, a Back Bay dowager demanded a copy of "A Tree Grows in Brookline." Three radio comedians pulled the "Lassie Comes Home because a Tree Grows in Brooklyn" gag in a single evening.

◆◆ In New York, J. R. de la Torra Bueno, Jr. (Bill to you) moved his desk from Knopf to Whittlesey House, presaging addition of a fiction line to that company's list. In the unlikely event that you do not already know it, Whittlesey House is the somewhat-difficult-to-pronounce name of one of the countless departments of the McGraw Hill Company. George Shively left Appleton-Century to join Doubleday, Doran. Joe Margolies has resigned his recently-assumed post of sales manager for Heritage Press. Margolies is too expert a retail book man to be allowed to stray into other fields. If a big chain is looking for a qualified head, Trade Winds suggests a guy called Joe. . . .

BOB HOPE is weighing the title "Hope Chest" for his forthcoming S. & S. tome. Somebody asked Bob what went through his mind when he got his original gander at Dorothy Lamour in a sarong. "Never gave it a second thought," he averred. "I was too busy with the first one!" . . . Edward R. Hewitt, in "Those Were the Days" (Duell, Sloan, and Pearce), tells the story of the first time Mrs. Hamilton Fish took the controls of her shiny new electric runabout. She was tooting merrily down Third Avenue at a ten-mile-an-hour clip when a burly



pedestrian stepped directly into her path. She tried to stop, but pushed the lever too far forward, thus increasing her speed. Her victim was just beginning to figure what had hit him when the flustered Mrs. Fish jammed her car into reverse, and got him again on the way back. Once more she jammed her lever forward too far. "Hit 'im again, lady!" cried an entranced onlooker. The pedestrian rolled out of her way in the nick of time. "Twice, madam, is sufficient," he informed her. . . . Trade Winds's attorney did even better than Mrs. Fish on his first solo appearance at the wheel of a new Oldsmobile twenty years later. Inside of two hours he drove through the brick wall of a garage, knocked the shovel out of the hands of a startled day-laborer, and shattered his windshield on the branch of a young oak tree outside the Sunningdale Golf Club. He now patronizes the Madison Avenue bus. . . .

GOSSIPS on Publishers' Row will tell you that the State Department does not see eye to eye with Lippincott on the manuscript of Kerensky's book on Russia . . . that Ely Culbertson's secretary is readying her diary for publication. She says that after Hal Sims and Oswald Jacoby, Mr. C. finds Hitler and Tojo mere child's play . . . that John Hersey's novel about the AMG in Italy, "A Bell for Adano," is likely to be one of the fiction standouts of the new season (Knopf will publish it on January 17). . . . that Howard Hunt, author of "East of Farewell," has hit the bell again with "Limit of Darkness," scheduled for March 8 . . . that Princeton University Press is readying a vital publication entitled "The Establishment of Constitutional Government in Bulgaria" (honest!) . . . that Houghton Mifflin's Dale Warren has been propositioned by a leading author for a life of General MacArthur, to be entitled "God Is My Co-President" . . . that Franklin Spier came home from judging a first-novel competition rubbing his arm and declaring "I'm suffering from a severe attack of new-writus" . . . and that at a luncheon of six publishers, only two could give the correct definition of "stultify," one of "transpire." Try them yourself! . . .

HERBERT HOOVER, declares Marc Connelly firmly, is the greatest economist since Marie Antoinette. . . . Jesse Stuart's neighbors have turned into autograph hounds. Five years ago they were ready to shoot him, and he had to pack a rod in self-defense. "Today," he writes, "I've put aside the gun, but I've got to carry three fountain pens instead!" . . . The novel that Ludwig Bemelmans is writing

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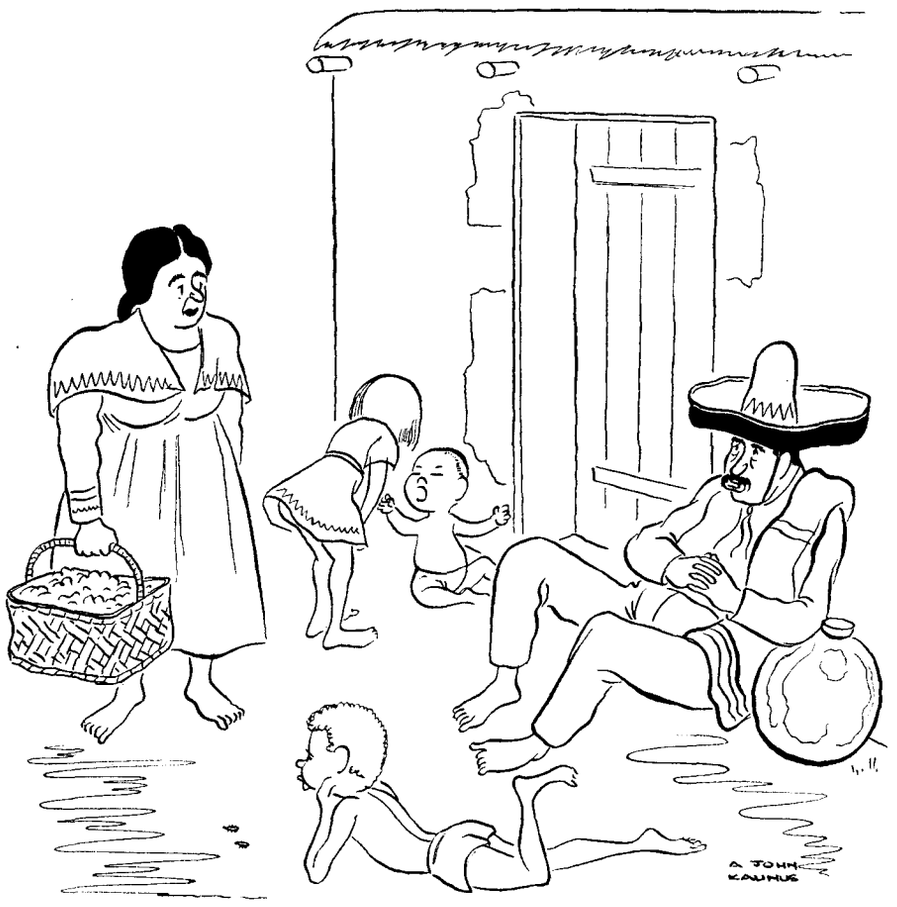


"Why you no go and fight like American woman?"

about Hollywood will be called "Your Sins are Forgiven." . . . "A fascist country," opines Robert St. John, "is where they name a street after you one day, and chase you down it the next." . . . An ambitious lady shoplifter in Scribner's during the holiday rush attempted to make off with no less a volume than the Columbia Encyclopedia! Apprehended a few steps from the store, she threw the book at the hawk-eyed detective, who bore a startling resemblance to Nick Wreden. . . . Nick had another brush with a well-dressed customer in the rare edition department. "How is this volume bound?" she inquired. "Genuine calf," said Nick. "How was that again?" "Calf—genuine calf." "WHAT did you say?" she persisted. Nick threw back his head, closed his eyes, and roared "MOO." The lady settled for a first edition of "Vanity Fair." . . . When Brentano's opens its new Los Angeles branch on March 1, Karl Placht will be its manager. The new store, on Seventh Street, opposite J. W. Robinson's, will be the sixteenth unit in the expanding Brentano chain. There is a good chance that Number Seventeen will be located in Mexico City. . . .

NORMAN CORWIN tells about a famous theatrical agent who was walking down Broadway when he passed a youngster playing a harmonica. Ordinarily this would not have registered on the agent's consciousness, but what stopped him in his tracks was a caterpillar on the sidewalk which was dancing up and down in time to the music.

The agent's eyes bulged. "Stop that playing, son," he commanded. When the music ceased, the caterpillar curled up listlessly on the ground.

"Now start playing again."

The caterpillar was on tiptoe dancing again as soon as the boy resumed his tune.

"This beats anything yet," exulted the agent. He carefully picked up the caterpillar, linked arms with the boy, and rushed back to his office. "Fellows," he cried, "have I got a novelty act that will knock 'em for a loop!"

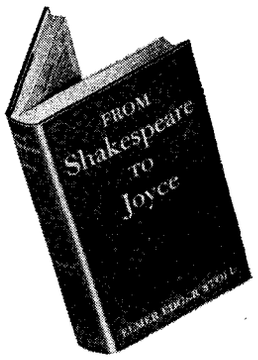
The caterpillar was a great performer. He never missed a cue. Everybody was so excited about the act that the original notion for a modest presentation gradually expanded into a stupendous spectacle with thousands of dollars' worth of scenery and glittering girls. The big star was the caterpillar.

Ten minutes before the curtain was scheduled to go up on the opening night, however, the catastrophe occurred. The caterpillar turned into a butterfly. . . . BENNETT CERF.

FROM
Shakespeare
TO
Joyce

AUTHORS AND CRITICS
LITERATURE AND LIFE

By
Elmer Edgar Stoll



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DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

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A Doctor and God

BEHIND THE UNIVERSE. A Doctor's Religion. By Louis Berman, M.D. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1943. 303 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by BERTRAM D. LEWIN, M.D.

A PUBLIC that is apt to associate "a doctor" with Luke Fildes's painting, and a doctor's activities with such extraversions as the narratives of Victor Heiser and Gordon Seagrave, may be surprised to find that there is another type of doctor that can write books; namely, a type that is sensitive-intellectual, interested in ideas primarily, concerned with broad syntheses and general principles of cosmology and theology. Such a physician is Dr. Berman, whose book presents a conception of the universe and its total relationship to God. Dr. Berman considers not merely medicine as a science (which his reputation as a worker in endocrine physiology would lead one to expect), but covers the whole field of biology, including scientific psychology, where he approximates Jung's point of view and apparently accepts the latest researches into telepathy. In addition he deals with the newer views on extension, the space-time concept on the one hand, the problems of supra-consciousness or group-consciousness in the other direction. Metaphysical, not clinical, science makes up this book.

The universe which Dr. Berman glimpses through all this array of fact, near-fact, and theory, is a familiar enough one in spite of its up-to-dateness. It is pantheistic; its god is the god of creative evolution. "Space-time, matter-energy, cosmos-life are concordant aspects of the same underlying entity." The universe is a Spinozist world, motored by a god of Bergsonian creative evolution, and religion is the mystic identification of the individual with such a world or God. Spinoza and Bergson are not included in Dr. Berman's reference list of authors. Yet, Dr. Berman uses Bergson's familiar example of "creative evolution"—the parallel development of the eye in molluscs and vertebrates; his treatment of time and memory is like Bergson's, and his monism is like Spinoza's. Dr. Berman would more probably wish to be compared with the English clergyman, William Paley, who named his book, "Natural Theology or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature."

Dr. Berman's grand conception of the universe misses out on the part that so much concerns human beings. Love and hate, everyday struggle and joy, war and peace fit into small chinks of "space-time" and "cosmos-life." The individual is conceived as subject to the laws of physics and an intellectualistic "psychation." The emotional life is set aside from the center of human interest. Hence it is interesting that at the very end, emotion, as if it had been lying in wait for the opportunity, is permitted to erupt in one grand "mystic participation" with God and the universe.

History's Children

THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION 1763-1790. *By Evarts Boutell Greene. New York: The Macmillan Co.* 1943. 487 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by BERNHARD KNOLLENBERG

THIS fourth volume in the series entiled A History of American Life, edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Dixon Ryan Fox, and Carl Becker, is a successful effort to give a survey of the day-to-day life of the British colonists in North America immediately before, during, and after the American Revolution. No one knows more facts about this period than Professor Greene, and he has brought together the findings of a lifetime. His selection of topics covered is indicated by the chapter headings: "American Business between Two Wars," "Pre-Revolutionary Culture," "Emerging Americanism," "The War's Economic Effects," and "Culture in the New Order."

To my mind the outstanding features of Professor Greene's work (apart from its learning) are his freedom from sectional bias and his demonstration of the extent to which the Critical Period, so often depicted as a kind of desert between the Revolutionary War and the establishment of the Constitution and the new Federal Government, was one of great fertility the fruits of which were gathered later.

The general reader, though not likely to read this book straight through, will find a great deal of information to interest him, but its principal value will be to the serious student of the period and to the librarian, neither of whom can afford to overlook this volume. This is especially true of the concluding chapter, "Critical Essay on Authorities," which brings together under logically selected headings a masterly survey of the authoritative works, old and new, in every branch of political, social, and economic life of the 1763-1790 period in America.

BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

Stoking the Furnace

THE GASTRONOMICAL ME. By M. F. K. Fisher. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce Inc. 1943. 295 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH

IF you love good food and drink this book is bound to give you something of the same kind of pleasure you found in G. B. Stern's "Bouquet" back in the twenties. But I warn you there will be moments of pain too. For you will constantly be reminded that gastronomy is an art of yesterday and, while the meals Mrs. Fisher describes will cause your gastric juices to gush from their cells like little springs from the hills, those juices will meet up only with frustation. Today, alas, most of Mrs. Fisher's restaurants, chefs, waiters are gone with the wind, their wines and sauces gobbled up by the Huns. But this is more than a book on food. It is the autobiography of a happy woman—happy in the sense of Santayana's definition which she quotes on the fly-leaf. "To be happy you must have taken the measure of your powers, tasted the fruits of your passion, and learned your place in the world." It is also the story of a life rich in drama, romance, friendships, and travel. Food has contributed generously to all of these, but for the author the three basic hungers of life, "food, and security and love are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others." And so in her book she has used food much as a composer uses a theme for his symphony—a theme he holds and returns to, but elaborates extensively and wanders from at will.

But perhaps this is a little too "fancy" a comparison for Mrs. Fisher's book. Certainly it makes no attempt to be in the least profound; indeed much of its charm lies in its complete lack of pretentiousness. The author is refreshingly free from any desire to be or to appear to be any different from what she is, namely a sensuous, intelligent woman with a rare love of life, a delightful sense of humor, and no excess baggage. She is gay without being frivolous, candid but never embarrassingly personal. She has traveled much, has lived in California, France, and Mexico and she tells not only of food but of the friends she makes everywhere of "natives," waiters, cooks, and landlords. And whether she is describing the cook at Miss Huntington's school where she ate her first oyster, the obsessed waitress in the old mill in Burgundy, or the Mexican hill-woman grieving for her spli' beans and pots she needs only a few sentences to make them alive to you.

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Burnett's Big Boys

NOBODY LIVES FOREVER. By W. R. Burnett. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1943. 243 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

IF somebody must write about gangsters and con-men and red-hot babes, our preference for the job is W. R. Burnett. Others have written faster and bloodier tales, but Burnett adds that extra dividend of humanity, in just such a manner as some writers have recently been endowing detective stories with the qualities of the novel, like it or not. The materials here are stale enough when catalogued: Jim Farrar, the Big Boy, con-man and charmer, Johnny the Priest, his mouthpiece, a whole array of lesser crooks and gunmen, Tony, a tough and voluptuous red-haired package, and Gladys Halvorsen, a rich widow to be fleeced. Taken from there it could be any one of a number of stock thrillers, and the notable thing is that Burnett takes it from there with a freshness of approach as though nobody had ever written this tale before.

He does it by applying writing pressure, not to any unique twists of plot (that rolls along generally as expected), but to solid and unique characterization. Jim is a good deal like other Big Boys of the underworld we have met, but Gladys Halvorsen, far from being a convenient, flatly-drawn victim, tethered for the kill, develops into a full, rich character, so thoroughly and sensitively perceived that she changes the book's tone and substance—it grows with her. Johnny the Priest and Tony, more briefly handled, move and talk with a great deal of vitality and certainly with enough freedom from cliché to offer surprise. And Burnett has given care to his group of lesser characters, the cheap racketeers and hangers-on. Each of them is a special creation complete in mood, gesture, habit, past, instead of being a collection of hard words thrown from tough mouth-corners. There is no need to elevate this story beyond its natural level, which is among those immensely readable high-powered crime-and-sex novels done by Hammett, Cain, Ambler, and Burnett, among others. It is worthwhile noting that Burnett lavishes upon his story, inside that level, care and craftsmanship enough to make it as good as it can be.

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Assorted Disasters in a Furious Theme

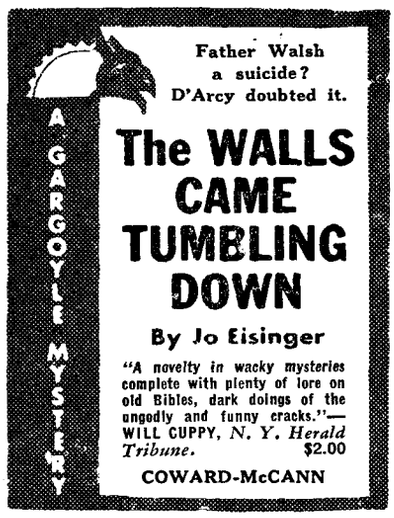
FLINT. By Charles G. Norris. New York: Doubleday, Doran. 1943. 354 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

CHARLES NORRIS'S new novel with a hardly surprising monosyllabic title is a knockout narrative of violence, romance, and assorted disasters. As in his other novels there is a controversial theme which the author rides furiously throughout the book, all but pushing the characters and their private woes off the pages. The theme in "Flint" is powerful and genuine, the internecine conflict between labor and capital, particularly along the San Francisco waterfront, where in the mid-thirties clashes were frequent and dramatic and the Red scare was at its most vermilion. Capital is represented by the shipping dynasts of the Rutherford clan, ultra-conservative and not too scrupulous, labor by union organizers and leaders (ultra-radical and not too scrupulous) and a collectivist-minded minor official of the U. S. Department of Labor. Capital and labor meet in anything but a subtle manner when harbor activities are repeatedly held up by strikes, when Stan, crown prince of the Rutherford family, becomes enamored of a communist sympathizer, when his regal cousin marries the collectivist, and when his long-lost cousin turns out to be a union firebrand.

It is not altogether clear what the author is trying to say about his theme, other than that capital-labor relations are in a state of alarming confusion—unless the jacket blurb is correct in asserting that "Flint" provides a "frightening preview of the possible postwar world." If so, "frightening" is understatement, for bloody revolution like that of France, Russia, and Spain lies ahead of us. Of the six adults in the Rutherford family, one dies after a bombing, one is the victim of a paralytic seizure in a strike altercation, another dies mysteriously in his room when a strike leader makes a nocturnal visit, another is shot by one of his own guards; the fiancé of one daughter is stabbed to death, and her brother, heir to the dynasty, is shot down by the waterfront leader. Horror is piled on horror immoderately and incredibly. If Mackey of the Department of Labor speaks the author's prophecy, America is headed toward communism, which may be or may not be attained without concentration caps and "liquidations," but which is inevitable. The forty million workers, not a privileged few capitalists, are going to run America.

In spite of accurately drawn backgrounds, competent workmanship, and an undeniable power, Charles Norris's books always have a certain naïveté which gives a romantic cast to these earnest studies of our time meant, one is sure, to be wholly realistic. The almost complete lack of irony and humor is partly to blame. In "Flint" the romanticism appears chiefly in the vaguely realized characters and storming narrative, not in the handling of the thesis. The author presents with scrupulous fairness the claims and grievances of both sides, and actually is less romantic than John Steinbeck, Josephine Herbst, or Michael Gold in picturing the class struggle. In spite of tedious, sagging passages of debate and analysis, the book illuminates rather than preaches, and is thus superior to such earlier thesis novels as "Seed," "Bread," and "Brass."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By Howard Collins

THE POETS ON TREES

Miss Marie Felix, of Auburndale, Massachusetts, invites you to identify the 16 trees in the poetical quotations listed below. Allowing 3 points for each tree correctly named and another 3 if you can also name the poet, a score of 60 is par, 69 is very good, and 75 or better is excellent. You'll find the answers on page 21.

1. About the woodlands I will go
   To see the ..... hung with snow.
2. Alas for him who never sees
   The stars shine through his ..... trees!
3. But the ..... they were not blind to Him,
   The little gray leaves were kind to Him. . . .
4. I saw in Louisiana a ..... growing,
   All alone stood it and the moss hung down from the branches. . . .
5. Like little girls at their first communion
   The ..... trees stand.
6. Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast,
   To soften rocks, or bend a knotted .....
7. Now de ..... trees am blooming
   On de sandy shore. . . .
8. So was I once myself a swinger of .....
9. Strew on her roses, roses,
   With never a sprig of .....
10. The moan of doves in immemorial .....
    And murmuring of innumerable bees.
11. The scarlet of the ..... can shake me like the cry
    Of bugles going by.
12. The wind is in the ..... trees, and the temple bells they say:
    "Come you back, you British soldier . . ."
13. Under the ..... tree
    Who loves to lie with me. . . .
14. They sailed away, for a year and a day,
    To the land where the ..... tree grows.

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Compact Climax

HOTEL ON THE LAKE. By Robert Smith. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1943. 298 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

IF life in a typical New England summer hotel is anything like this, you will be well advised to seek your two weeks of relaxation closer to home. That is the trouble, and the only one, with Robert Smith's first novel: it crowds a large mass of distilled observation into a very limited time and place, so that all the dramas and passions and climaxes of a lifetime pass before our eyes during the few weeks of a Maine summer. The story is dramatically topheavy; we say this quite aware of how difficult it is for a young writer, with many things to say, to restrain himself or think of such things as balance and design.

The parts here are greater than the whole; they are very good indeed. The characterizations are beautifully done. Every one of them, each of the waitresses and bellboys and guides and guests, has a precision of characterization that is accomplished almost without effort, in good, stripped action. Stripped, that is, of extraneous talk or description or lucubration. It is a behaviorist novel, and its brightest moments are physical, the drinking in a cellar and the love in an attic, the fight in the woods, the baseball game, the compact feel of things everywhere. Of course the behaviorist life is brittle and blind, and breaks down as it must into pessimism. Jerry the bellboy, central figure of the story, loves without knowing what it is, hates only out of sheer irritation, seems to understand nothing that he sees (although Smith does, no question of that), and leaves the scene at last only with the bitterest taste in his mouth, and little hope. It is on the whole a bitter and unhappy story, told clearly and with great literary vitality. Mr. Smith is likely to turn into a first-class writer.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 510)

JOHN ERSKINE:
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Announcing publication January 22

SRL Guide to Books on Music

1944 EDITION

ONE of the most successful 1943 projects of *The Saturday Review* was the innovation —A Guide to Books on Music —featured as a supplement in the January 30 issue. For some weeks and months after this number appeared, we received requests from subscribers who wished to buy additional copies for friends, from music librarians around the country and from students and faculty members of leading conservatories of music.

SRL has entrusted to the same board of distinguished guest editors, under the general direction of Professor Douglas Moore, of Columbia University, the job of preparing another Guide to Books on Music for *January 22, 1944*. Again, a notable group of writers will be represented. Some of the highlights will be:

"The Decline of the Concert Hall," by Roger Sessions.

"Opera in English," by Eric Clarke.

"New Music Published During 1943," by Elliott Carter.

"Guide to Books on Music," by Roger Sessions.

A selected list, with commentary, of books on music published in 1942 and 1943, compiled by Richard S. Angell, music librarian of Columbia University.

Reviews of the current books on music, by Paul Lang, Douglas Moore, Chalmers Clifton, Daniel Gregory Mason, George Herzog, and others.

***SRL's* Guide to Books on Music will supplement the regular issue of *January 22*.**

The Phoenix Nest

ART YOUNG is dead, who was a lovable man, a crusader whose cartoons, with their pith and irony and masterly draughtsmanship, recalled the heyday of Thomas Nast. He was also one of those homespun Americans like the late Eugene Wood, father of the famous actress Peggy Wood, who espoused the Socialist cause, and brought to his partisanship the honest grassroots acumen of the old-style American. 'Gene Debs was of that ilk. Debs was as Hoosier as James Whitcomb Riley, but he hated hogs and humbugs wherever found. Art Young was a humorist of social protest. Some of his drawings for the old *Masses* became famous. He had a black-and-white style that was saliently distinctive. Max Eastman, his old editor on the original *Masses*, called him a cigar-end-chewing Schopenhauer or Ibsen. Most recently Young wrote his autobiography in a breezy, ingratiating way, "Art Young, His Life and Times." Seven or eight years ago the book of cartoons, "The Best of Art Young," was introduced by Heywood Broun, now himself become an almost mythological figure. He was at work on another book when he died. I hope it will be published. This free and independent congeries of States is the poorer, decidedly, for Art Young's passing.

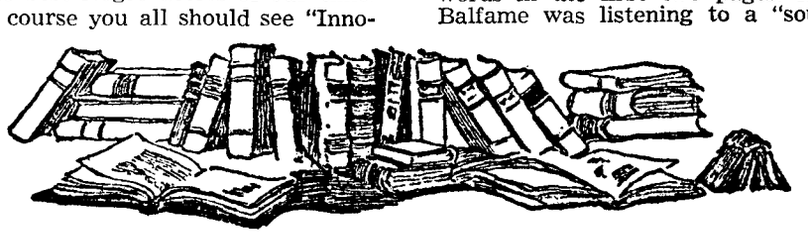
The recent death of Arthur W. Colton, writer of delightful stories and at least one extremely memorable poem, "Harps Hung Up in Babylon," removed an American man-of-letters all too little appreciated by his country. For years he was librarian of the University Club in this city. Readers are directed to his "The Delectable Mountains," "The Debatable Land," and "The Belted Seas."

I saw a good play the other night, the first night of "South Pacific." That doesn't mean it didn't have faults. It had some, in the writing, in the direction, in the acting. But it also had one of our greatest actors, Canada Lee, in it; and Howard Rigsby and Dorothy Heyward had made an honest play of it. It said things about the Negro that were worth listening to. I hope by the time you read this that you may still have an opportunity to see it. It has also presented to the stage a remarkable boy actor, Rudolph Whitaker. He should become one of the best Negro actors of our time.

Of course you all should see "Innocent Voyage," made from Richard Hughes's classic "High Wind in Jamaica." And then I've been wanting to tell you about a preview I saw of "Voice in the Wind," to be released through United Artists. It will be presented by Arthur Ripley and Rudolph Monter and was directed by Arthur Ripley. It stars Francis Lederer. The picture is a "sleeper," made on rented stages at the Talisman Studio in Hollywood. The producers had no guarantee of release but gambled on their ability. United Artists topped bids put in by two other major studios for its release. It has many fine moments of great pathos and beauty, and is a cut above the average film. The scene is the melancholy island of Guadalupe, the hero a refugee Czech pianist, who has rebelliously played "The Moldau" in Prague when the Nazis banned it from his program. The sinister Angelo and his murderous brothers are excellently portrayed by Alexander Granach, J. Carroll Naish, and David Cota. The girl is made very appealing by Sigrid Gurie. It will be some time before I forget the atmosphere of those hot nights in Guadalupe! I understand that the actual cost of this picture was a mere drop in the bucket to what movie producers usually spend. It just shows what art can do!

Earle Walbridge has made me a Christmas present of the following commentary, which I am glad to print:

> One of the charms of the recent series of Authors' League talks m.c.'d by Kurt Steel and held at N.Y.U., was their total unexpectedness. You never knew what was coming up next. For instance, take the case of Gertrude Atherton's masterfully written murder novel, "Mrs. Balfame" (Stokes, 1916). For years I have been giving away copies to friends. Now comes Hugh MacNair Kahler and states (on the evening of the day I had bought another copy) that the late Holworthy Hall (Harold E. Porter) once stated that the two most striking openings in fiction were those of one of Sir Gilbert Parker's novels ("Not Guilty, My Lords") and of Mrs. Atherton's "Mrs. Balfame." That begins with the flat statement: "Mrs. Balfame had made up her mind to commit murder." Mr. Kahler went on to say that he believes in always using the specific Saxon word instead of a roundabout or polysyllabic Romance word. Now one of the things I have always remembered from "Mrs. Balfame" is the use of two unusual words in the first two pages. Mrs. Balfame was listening to a "sound



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and escharotic speaker" when she decided to slay Dave Balfame. We'll skip escharotic. But she was going to kill him because their double bed sagged, and she yearned for "a delitescent bedroom." Kurt Steel agrees with me that that is sufficient grounds for divorce, if not motive for murder, but neither of us can figure out "delitescent," defined by Webster as "latent." How can you have a latent bedroom?—unless it's in the fourth dimension. I think Mrs. Atherton confused Mrs. Balfame's wishes with her bedroom—she had a latent desire for a room of her own, like Virginia Woolf. Speaking of whom, I am told by Mrs. Inez Haynes Irwin that Rebecca West, when asked what Mrs. Woolf looked like when arrayed for the evening, replied something in this wise: "Well, I judge that when Mrs. Woolf has dressed her maid announces, 'Madam, the hedge is ready,' and she goes out and walks through it."

I think anybody who read or reread the Provincial Lady's diaries would wish to see her creator in person, and I took care to do so when she was here in 1933 and was giving a talk before the English-Speaking Union. Her American diary was appearing in *Punch* at the time, illustrated (as were the first two) by the late Commander Arthur Watts—one of E. Nesbit's circle of young men, by the way. For some inexplicable reason, he suddenly began to make Our Vicar's Wife, a tall rangy woman in the first two books, almost an old crone. In the question period after her talk, I piped up, "Miss Delafield, why has Our Vicar's Wife aged so terribly?" She laughed delightfully and said, "If you knew what the life of an English vicar's life is like you wouldn't wonder a bit."

Apropos of E. M. Delafield, I am interested by her rhymed dedication to "The Heel of Achilles" ("To Yoé: my sister, and always my greatest friend") because she put it in quotation marks. If she didn't write it, who did? It runs in part:

"Provinces twain o'er the land held
sway, and the country was ruled
by twain,
I made the laws, as King, but you,
as Premier, revoked them again.
You were my faithful A.D.C., when
I was the Captain bold,
But Watson I, to your Sherlock
Holmes, in the Baker Street days
of old.
. . . . . .
So now you work at a real career,
and I'm writing, in Singapore
And send my book, to my Twain—a
token of all that has gone before."

Speaking of Birkenhead's "Against Oblivion," as Mr. Lamont was recently doing, this biography of Keats's friend, Joseph Severn, set me wondering whether his name suggested the pseudonym "Joseph Shearing" to Mrs. Gabrielle Campbell Long. If only Fanny Brawne was the sinister female she used to be considered and intended to poison poor Johnny Keats, what a whale of a shocker Mrs. Long could make of it! She handles Italian atmosphere superbly (consider "The Spider in the Cup"), partly because by her first marriage she was the Signora Costanzo.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Cherry. A. E. Housman: "Loveliest of Trees."
2. Cypress. John Greenleaf Whittier: "Snowbound."
3. Olives. Sidney Lanier: "A Ballad of Trees and the Master."
4. Live-oak. Walt Whitman: "I Saw a Live-oak."
5. Pear. Sara Teasdale: "May Day."
6. Oak. Congreve: "The Mourning Bride."
7. Orange. Stephen Collins Foster: "Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground."
8. Birches. Robert Frost: "Birches."
9. Yew. Matthew Arnold: "Requiescat."
10. Elms. Tennyson: "The Princess."
11. Maples. Bliss Carmen: "A Vagabond Song."
12. Palm. Rudyard Kipling: "Mandalay."
13. Greenwood. William Shakespeare: "As You Like It."
14. Bong. Edward Lear: "The Owl and the Pussy Cat."

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
YOU ONLY HANG ONCE *H. W. Roden* (Morrow: $2.)	Murders of shady lawyer and socialite broker plunge publicity man and shamus pal into furious battle with gaudy crew of malefactors.	Perfumed gunsels with pin-point pupils, racketeers with ghoulish hands, copious gun-play, slugging, drinking, and uninhibited conversation.	Tough enough
DESIGN IN DIAMONDS *Kathleen Moore Knight* (Crime Club: $2.)	Dutch diamond hoard entrusted to N. Y. public-relations counsellors leads to murders in Mexico and exposure of predatory Nazi gang.	Much adventure, plus satisfactory modicum of sleuthing by Margot Blair. Good atmosphere, believable characters, and plentiful thrills.	Good
THE INCONVENIENT CORPSE *E. P. Fenwick* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Two women bludgeoned at winter house-party. Newspaper girl who spots killer barely escapes sticky end.	Exciting and well-written exercise in untrammeled emotions—although as "mystery" it's outside the canon.	Interesting

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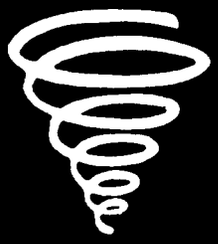

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PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a special and intelligent clientèle; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, traveling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purpose and character of The Saturday Review. Ads of a strictly personal nature are limited to an exchange of correspondence, thus also enabling an exchange of reference. Rates: 10 cents per word including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received eight days in advance of publication. We forward all mail received in answer to box numbers. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y.

WOMAN, 25 or over, preferably with university, college, or normal school background; some knowledge of pedagogy would help, but more important still, she should be teachable herself; she should laugh more easily than she cries, be vivid, vivacious and vital, with a genius for making friends for herself and her company; she should be able to accept a call to the Bronx or Brownsville, Texas, with equanimity. "Possunt Quia Posse Didentur" is the motto of her organization, and she must believe that utterly. For two months' probationary period, a token salary of $75 monthly will be paid; if applicant and job fit each other, a permanent contract will be entered into; expansion of our business makes this an opportunity for a woman who is willing to set her time and ambition against our time and financial backing. If this sounds like your opportunity, write naturally and informally, but informatively, at once. Box 981-H.

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WISCONSIN WOMAN, transplanted—(thistle not orchid)—would appreciate letters from kindly folk in California area. But please! no cynics, dyspeptics, or misunderstood people. Box 977-H.

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SRL'S SOUTHWEST ISSUE (May 16, 1942) is still in demand, but the supply is exhausted. We will pay you 15c and mailing costs for any copies in good condition. (Thanks to the prompt response, we no longer need copies for October 16 and November 13, 1943.)

UNIVERSITY EDUCATED MAN, artistically inclined idealist anchored to prosaic business routine, desires correspondence with lady who is mentally stimulating but not painfully highbrow. Box 972-H.

SRL Maintains Classroom Service

The Saturday Review of Literature has inaugurated a new classroom service, which is directed by Carrie Belle Parks, of State Teachers College, Indiana, Pa. For teachers of English in high schools and colleges, Miss Parks has prepared a manual of suggestions for use of *The Saturday Review* in the classroom. Also available is a special monthly bulletin for teachers using the service. *The Saturday Review* has made for teachers a special student subscription rate—6 issues, 50 cents, 12 issues, $1, for bulk orders shipped to one name. A free copy for the instructor is included.

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The Crostics Club

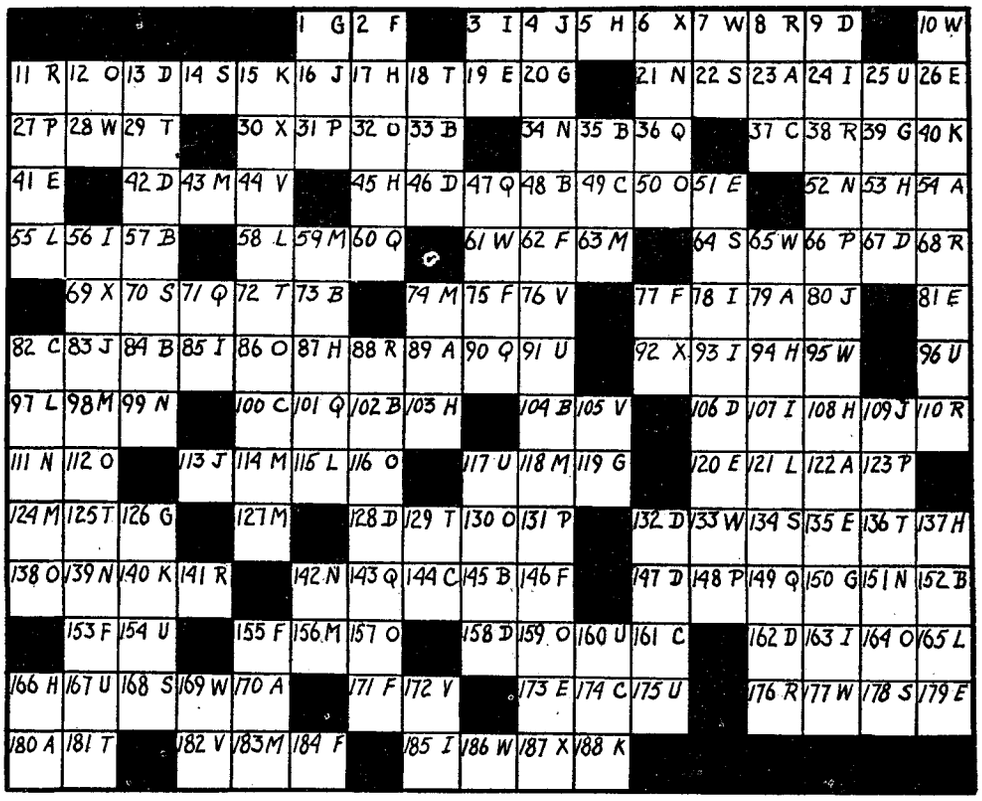
CHESTER BRADFORD, Evanston, Ill., suggests that it might be fun (if unsporting) to really stun our DCers some day by deserting the great Noah and his famous work for a few from Gelett Burgess's *Unabridged,* 1914, which he has cherished and even adopted in part in family circles. Once I myself in one of my Books gave you from it *Zobzib,* an amiable fool; a blunderer who is kind but brainless, and in illustration the zobzib who came with brush and broom when he was out and though she meant all right zobzibbed everything he needed out of sight. *Bromide* and *blurb* are of his creation and in general use. I presume that if more of those words were used they would similarly find their way into authoritative sources. Mr. Bradford's suggestion has caused me to wonder why Gelett Burgess today dislikes slang so intensely: for it was he who led the protest against *tow-row.*

Tow-row takes me back to that write-up in *The New Yorker,* and lest from it any of you think that I am a stickler for "culture" I want to give you a favorite guide of mine from William James's essay on the "College Bred": "Priggishness is just like painters' colic or any other trade disease. . . . Real culture lives by sympathies and admirations, not by dislikes and disdains; under all misleading wrappings it pounces unerringly upon the human core."

Mary Elizabeth Osborn of the English Department of Hood College has sent me a copy of her new novelette, "Days Beyond Recall," whose writing, she says, was interspersed with DC solvings. I am eager to get to it as the familiar background of my own Catskill Mt. summers for years until I was able to choose for myself. Miss Osgood likes most of all in the DCs "feeling the rhythm of each passage emerge gradually. Is it prose or poetry? Elizabethan or contemporary? Strangely enough, writers who irritate me when taken in large doses," she says, "have the same effect when I read them in DCs. For example, a passage from Meredith has me foaming at the mouth even before I've solved enough of it to know it is Meredith."

Harriet T. Cooke, Washington, D. C., called my attention to the mistake I made recently in attributing *The Lamplighter* to Martha Cummins instead of to Maria S. Cummins. That was a curious slip-up, for as I typed it apparently I was reminded of that Martha Cummings of "Timothy's Quest" whose tombstone near the family home led little Timothy, looking for a mother for his beloved Gay, to ring the doorbell and ask for Martha Cummings, long anathema to that Puritan household (if my memory serve me aright.)

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 511

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. French explorer who named the region of Louisiana (1682).

B. Extorted by violence.

C. Cornered; trapped (colloq.; 3 wds.)

D. Apathetic; heedless.

E. Insensible to disgrace.

F. Comparison of laws (Dept. of Anthropology).

G. Traitorous nephew of King Arthur.

H. Without motion (air).

I. To vanquish.

J. Pains by ingratitude; disrespect, etc.

K. The top of the head (Anatomy).

L. Name of an English Pope (1154-59).

M. Anti-slavery Journal which serialized "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1851-2).

N. A series of meetings to transact business, etc.

O. Novel by Sinclair Lewis (1927).

P. A *Machine* in a title by Elmer Rice (1923).

Q. Second husband of heroine of "Middlemarch."

R. A hearth adjunct for firewood.

S. Freshness of vegetation.

T. American ballad writer (1819-1902) ("Ben Bolt").

U. A Princess who befriended Ulysses ("Odyssey").

V. Brewery refuse; hogwash; lees.

W. A repealed Amendment (U. S. Constitution).

X. Fissures; cracks.

WORDS

79 23 170 54 180 122 89

104 48 84 57 102 35 73 33 145 152

82 37 100 49 161 174 144

67 9 158 147 128 42 106 132 46 13 162

51 26 81 120 135 179 19 41 173

62 146 155 75 171 184 153 77 2

1 39 119 20 150 126

45 5 108 137 17 53 94 87 103 166

78 107 85 24 3 56 185 93 163

113 16 4 109 80 83

15 140 40 188

165 55 115 121 58 97

183 74 98 127 43 118 124 59 156 68 114

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